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FOR RELEASE Mr. James Frankel
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INDONESIA TODAY, a color film of breathtaking brilliance, will be presented on Friday April 22 at 8:00 p.m. at the Cleveland Museum of Art. With the Southeast Asia Conference being held in Bandung, Indonesia on April 18, this film is arriving at a particularly significant time. Its author, Lester F. Beck, is a specialist in documentary film production and a member of the Academy Award Committee on Documentary Films in California. The film is devoted to present-day Sumatra, Java and Bali - the heart of Indonesia - where Beck explored not only the cities and their surrounding towns but remote and beautiful places. It is the first complete all-color film taken in recent postwar years to give an exciting and authentic portrayal of one of the Orient's most fascinating areas.

In 1953 Beck journeyed to Indonesia as an advisor on problems of mass communication. Being a Professor of Psychology at the University of Southern California, his research was concerned primarily with human behavior. Soon, however, he found himself enchanted with the beauty of the country and the warmth of its people. As a guest of the Indonesian Government, Dr. Beck was given the opportunity to film the magnificence and drama confronting him everywhere.

The first part of the film introduces a dozen young Indonesian leaders who are visiting the United States. At home they are in charge of radio broadcasts, film production and news reporting for their government. Giving a brief description of their country, these young people compare life in the United States and Indonesia and invite Dr. Beck to visit them in their homeland.

Gladly accepting their invitation, Beck progresses to the second section of his film. Here, through his hosts, he presents the vastly varying aspects of Indonesian life. The young men introduce Beck to President Soekarno and he shows the president unveiling a freedom monument erected in honor of those who helped secure independence from the Dutch. Thousands of people crowd every thoroughfare

to catch a glimpse of the president - their living symbol of freedom.

In Indonesia today boys and girls are going to school together. In the colonial era only one boy in ten received an education. Girls were completely neglected. There is a junior festival with children dancing, singing and parading in celebration of "Children's Week." In another scene 'Wild Man of Borneo' is being played with the American zest for 'Cowboys and Indians.' Psychologist that he is by training and profession, Dr. Beck noticed the loyal family unit in which parents have an impartial devotion to their children and grandparents hold a respected position. He particularly noted, too, that children rarely bite their fingernails or suck their thumbs, and that even among adults ulcers are practically unknown.

In Bali Dr. Beck filmed temple ceremonies and marveled at the intricately designed offerings which the women bring to the gods. He listened charmed to the bell-like gamelan that plays for every procession and celebration in every village on the island. Young girls dance the traditional rhythmic legong, and the older men of the village stage a ritualistic monkey dance with chants and barks and a pleading libretto.

In Sumatra the dances and music are quite unlike those of Java and Bali. Drums replace gongs and the dancers have indigenous rhythms. To illustrate this difference, Dr. Beck records the ceremony surrounding the reburial of a national hero. Still more differences can be found in the matriarchic society of the Minaugkaban region.

Dr. Beck was particularly impressed by the fact that wherever he went in Indonesia, the government officials were always courteous, helpful and young. Some were in their twenties, most in their thirties and early forties.

He realized that these were the men who fought and won the war of independence and are now steering their country on its course of social reform. "Indonesia," says Dr. Beck, "is a young country in young hands."

"The values its citizens stress - free public education, equal political rights for women, freedom of worship and social justice for all - sound very like our

own concept of personal liberty and freedom," says Dr. Beck. "This is why Indonesia issued a postage stamp of its first president, Soekarno, pictured with George Washington on the stamp."

Indonesia is a color photographer's dream. Volcanic mountains rise sharply from the sea; crystal lakes dot many of their craters. The green and gold of rice fields reach from lowlands to mountain heights. Large blocks of dark green rubber, palm and teakwood forests catch the eye. Flowers, ferns and rare tropical birds add memorable color.

Indonesia with its 80,000,000 people, its vast natural resources and its vigorous young leadership is a country worth knowing better either by actual visit or through such a colorful medium as Lester F. Beck's exciting INDONESIA TODAY.